

REMARKS

The last Official Action in the above-identified application has been carefully considered. The Examiner's indications that claims 7-17 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form and that claims 18-24 are allowed are greatly appreciated. This amendment has been presented to place this application in condition for allowance. Accordingly, reconsideration of this application is respectfully requested.

By this amendment, claims 1, 3, 5-6, 11 and 15 have been amended. Claims 2 and 7 have been cancelled, without prejudice to their subsequent prosecution in any continuing application or disclaimer of any of the proprietary rights set forth therein. New claims 27-30 have been added. Claims 1, 3, 5-6, 8-24 and 27-30 remain pending in this application.

In the Official Action, the Examiner has rejected claims 1, 2, 5 and 6 as being rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Harle (U.S. Patent No. 5,769,897). In addition, the Examiner has also apparently rejected claim 3 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Harle.

As aforementioned, the Examiner has indicated that claims 7-17 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the features of the base claim and any intervening claims. Independent claim 1 has been amended hereto to include the features of previously resented claims 1, 2 and 7. Based upon the Examiner's indication of allowable subject matter, it is believed that claim 1 is in a condition for allowance. Since each of claims 5 and 6 are ultimately dependent upon claim 1, they are believed to be allowable therewith. It is therefore believed that the Examiner's rejection of claims 1, 2, 5 and 6 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) has been overcome by the present amendment and remarks and withdrawal thereof is respectfully requested.

In addition new claims 27-30 have been added by the present amendment. New independent claim 27 incorporates the features of previously presented claims 1, 2 and 15. Based upon the Examiner's indication of allowable subject matter in previously-presented claim 15, it is believed that new claim 27 is in condition for allowance. Since new claims 28-30 are all ultimately dependent upon new independent claim 27, they are believed to be allowable therewith. It is therefore believed that new claims 27-30 are in condition for allowance.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, it is respectfully submitted that the application as now presented is in condition for allowance. Early and favorable reconsideration of the application are respectfully requested.

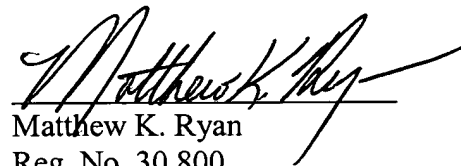
An additional fee of \$18.00 is deemed to be required for the additional claims presented in this amendment. Please charge any additional fee or credit any overpayment for this application to Deposit Account No. 50-0320.

A Notice of Allowance is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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